

Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 26 July 1990

The week in statistics ...

- Record production for some crops in 1988-89 2
- Job vacancies at four year low 2
- May decline keeps retail trend weak 3
- Industrial disputes up in April 4
- Surveying the surveyors 5
- Engineering services industry survey 5
- All the week's releases 6
- Calendar of key releases up to 7 August 7
- The latest ...
 - key State indicators 7
 - key national indicators 8

Record production for some crops in 1988-89

The final results of the 1988-89 Agricultural Census show record production of cotton, sugar, soybeans, lupins and field peas.

The area sown to wheat was down by 2.0 per cent, but high yields in all states except drought-affected South Australia resulted in an 13.4 per cent increase in production over the previous year.

Production increases were also recorded for oats, rice and maize, but barley, grain sorghum and other cereal crops declined in both area and production. A continuing increase was recorded in the total area of vegetables and of fruit.

While the total area of crops has declined from 19.8 million hectares in 1987 to 17.5 million in 1989, the area of sown pastures rose from 27.3 million hectares in 1987 to 30.2 million in 1989.

The area planted to vegetables increased 1.9 per cent on 1987-88. Most vegetables showed an increase in production especially tomatoes, cabbages and brussels sprouts.

Among fruit crops, bananas and kiwifruit showed the most significant increases in production. Kiwifruit yield increased by 106 per cent from 3.2 to 6.6 tonnes per hectare, largely because many Victorian vines matured to full bearing capacity.

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED CROPS

	Production 1988-89 '000 tonnes	Percentage change from 1987-88 to 1988-89
Wheat	13,935	13.4
Sugar	27,146	9.3
Cotton (seed)	813	6.7
Lupins	927	8.4
Field peas	517	6.2
Soybeans	130	88.4

For further information, order the publication Summary of Crops, Australia (7330.0), or contact Penelope Cooke on (06) 252 5300.

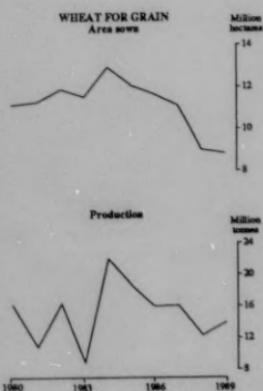
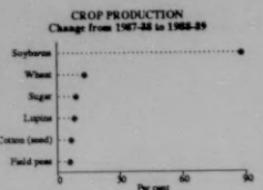
Job vacancies at four year low

Job vacancies fell by 9.1 per cent between February and May 1990 after adjustment for seasonal factors.

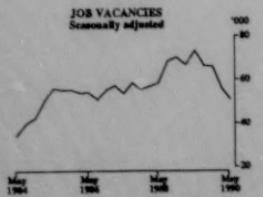
The May estimate of vacancies, at 50,900, is the lowest since August 1985, and is 30.5 per cent below the level in May 1989.

In original terms, private sector vacancies, at 33,000 in May, were down 21.6 per cent on February. Public sector vacancies fell by 5.8 per cent to 17,800 in May.

Continued ...



1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989



Employers in Western Australia and the Northern Territory reported the largest decreases in vacancy numbers, down 39.6 per cent and 31.6 per cent respectively.

The job vacancy rate (vacancies as a percentage of employees plus vacancies) fell from 1.05 per cent in February to 0.87 per cent in May.

For further information, order the publication Job Vacancies and Overtime, Australia (6354.0), or contact Mark Patton on (06) 252 5946.

May decline keeps retail trend weak

Australian retail turnover continues to weaken with average monthly trend estimates increasing by just 0.2 per cent over the 3 months ending May 1990. Average monthly growth over the twelve months to May was 0.5 per cent with the annual growth rate being 5.5 per cent.

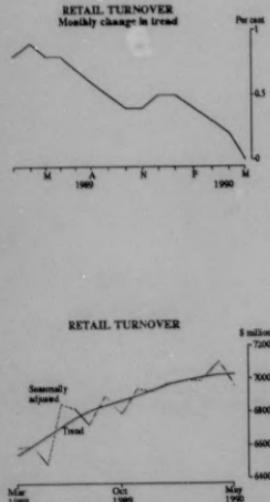
The seasonally adjusted estimate of turnover for the month of May fell 2.1 per cent which follows the 1.6 per cent increase recorded in April.

The table below shows that the major industries are experiencing varying growth. The 'grocers, confectioners and tobacconists' industry along with the 'hotels, liquor stores and licensed clubs' industry are showing weak to moderate growth over the past few months. Department and general stores (- 0.6% per month) and clothing and fabrics stores (- 0.1% per month) are in decline according to their average trend over the past three months.

Most of the remaining industries are in decline with only pharmacies showing strong growth, averaging 1.4 per cent per month over the last three months.

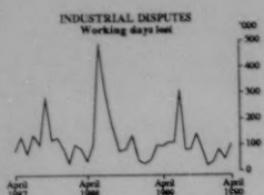
New South Wales and Tasmania are showing moderate growth in retail trend estimates. Victorian retail trade however is in decline, averaging - 0.8 per cent per month over the last 3 months. The other States are showing weak growth.

RETAIL TURNOVER



	Original value in May 1990 \$ million	Percentage change in trend	
		Average monthly increase for 3 months to May 1990	May 1990 over May 1989
Grocers etc	1,983	0.5	7.4
Hotels, liquor stores, licensed clubs	885	0.6	3.9
Department and general stores	802	-0.6	2.2
Clothing and fabrics stores	558	-0.1	-2.5
Other retailers	2,787	— not available —	
All retailers	7015	0.2	5.5

Industrial disputes up in April



Time lost through industrial disputes rose sharply to 100,000 working days in April 1990, with disputes in two major industry groups leading the way.

In the transport, storage and communication industries, total days lost are estimated to have increased to 52,800 compared with 3,000 in March 1990 and 1,000 in April 1989. This is the highest in any month for these industries since November 1985 (57,600).

The construction industry recorded 18,100 working days lost, after eight months of relative calm.

The two industry groups together accounted for 71 per cent of total working days lost during April.

In the twelve months ended April 1990 there were 1,198,000 working days lost in all industries, compared with 1,656,200 in 1989 and 1,301,200 in 1988. The biggest single reported cause of industrial disputes was disagreements with managerial policy, which accounted for 43 per cent of disputes.

In the same period, Victoria recorded the highest number of working days lost per thousand employees (253) while Tasmania recorded the lowest (59).

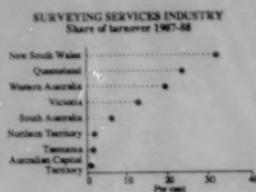
Over two-thirds of all disputes lasted one day or less and were resolved by resumption without negotiation.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS
WORKING DAYS LOST
('000)

Industry	April 1989	March 1990	April 1990	Twelve months ended April	
				1989	1990
Mining	9.7	13.2	4.9	496.0	202.0
Manufacturing	20.9	7.0	7.3	497.8	313.7
Construction	7.3	0.9	18.1	190.4	126.3
Transport and storage; communication	1.0	3.0	52.8	86.9	128.4
Other industries	57.0	21.7	16.9	385.1	427.7
All industries	95.8	45.8	100.0	1,656.2	1,198.0

For further information, order the publication Industrial Disputes, Australia (6321.0), or contact Laura Smith on (06) 252 6561.

Surveying 'the surveyors'



Over 1,100 private sector surveying services enterprises employed about 7,000 people, generated turnover of \$309 million and earned net operating surplus (operating profit) of almost \$46 million in 1987-88.

These are some of the findings of a new ABS survey of the private sector surveying industry in the 1987-88 financial year.

Some of the other results are:

- turnover, mostly fees for professional services, was equivalent to about \$45,000 for each person working in the industry.
- about 24 per cent of staff were part-time; about 16 per cent of males but over 50 per cent of the relatively few females in the industry worked part-time.
- net operating surplus (operating profit before interest and income tax) was about 15 per cent of the industry's turnover.
- there are very few large firms — the largest five employ only an average of 73 persons.

For further information see article below.

Engineering services industry survey

ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES INDUSTRY, 1987-88

	Number
Enterprises	5,190
Employment at end June	
Males	19,916
Females	8,410
Total	28,326

Analysis of turnover	
	\$m
Turnover	1,716
Operating expenses	770
Staff expenses	723
Other	223
Net operating surplus	223

ABS has released results of a new survey of the private sector engineering and technical services industry. The industry includes consulting engineers, quantity surveyors and various testing, assaying and similar technical services.

Consulting engineering is the dominant activity of the industry, accounting for 62 per cent (\$1,071 million) of the industry's turnover of \$1,716 million in the survey year 1987-88.

Other results of the survey include:

- the industry comprised about 5,200 enterprises which employed over 28,000 people and generated net operating surplus (operating profit) of \$223 million in 1987-88.
- over 18 per cent of people working within the industry were part-time — 9 per cent of males and 41 per cent of females.
- profitability (net operating surplus as a percentage of turnover) for the industry was about 13 per cent before interest and income tax.
- while 96 per cent of enterprises in the industry are small, employing less than 20 persons, these small firms account for only half the industry's staff and 42 per cent of its turnover.

Survey results for the surveying and engineering and technical services industries are found in the publications Surveying Services Industry, Australia (8665.0) and Engineering and Technical Services Industry, Australia (8666.0). More detailed statistics, particularly for consulting engineers, and formats allowing businesses to compare their own results with industry averages, are now being prepared by ABS. Further details can be obtained from Peter White on (06) 252 5633.

All the week's releases: 18 to 24 July

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically

To order any of the publications that appear in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

ABS Central Office

- ✉ PO BOX 10
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

☎ (06) 252 6627
FAX (06) 253 1404

ABS State Offices

- ✉ NSW (02) 268 4611
Vic. (03) 615 7000
Qld (07) 222 6351
WA (09) 323 5140
SA (08) 237 7100
Tas. (002) 20 5800
NT (089) 81 3456

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Peter Damcevski
Editor
Statistics Weekly
(06) 252 6101

General

- Statistics Weekly*, 19 July 1990 (1318.0; \$3.50)
Economic Indicators, Qld, July 1990 (1307.3; \$5.00)
Tasmanian Statistical Indicators, July 1990 (1303.6; \$8.00)

Demography

- Divorces*, Aust., 1989 (3307.0; \$10.00)
Divorces, NSW, 1989 (3304.1; \$7.60)
Causes of Death, Vic., 1988 (3302.2; \$7.50)

Social statistics

- Education*, Tas., 1989 (4206.6; \$8.00)

Labour statistics and prices

- Industrial Disputes*, Aust., April 1990 (6321.0; \$5.50)
Job Vacancies and Overtime, Aust., May 1990 (6354.0; \$10.00)
Price Indexes of Copper Materials, Aust., June 1990 (6410.0; \$3.50)
Price Indexes of Materials Used in Coal Mining, Aust., May 1990 (6415.0; \$5.00)

Agriculture

- Summary of Crops*, Aust., 1988-89 (7330.0; \$15.00)

Secondary industry and distribution

- Manufacturing Industry*, Aust., 1988-89, Preliminary (8201.0; \$5.00)
Production of Clothing and Footwear, Aust., April 1990 (8358.0; \$8.50)
Production of Food, Drink, Tobacco and Stock and Poultry Food, Aust., March 1990 (8359.0; \$8.50)
Production of Building Materials and Fittings, Aust., April 1990 (8361.0; \$5.50)
Production of Transport Equipment, Aust., April 1990 (8363.0; \$3.50)
Production of Energy Products, Aust., April 1990 (8368.0; \$3.50)
Retail Trade, Aust., May 1990 (8501.0; \$8.50)
Surveying Services Industry, Aust., 1987-88 (8665.0; \$8.00) — new issue
Engineering and Technical Services Industry, Aust., 1987-88 (8666.0; \$8.00) — new issue
Construction Activity at Constant Prices, Aust., March Qtr 1990 (8782.0; \$8.00)

- Production Statistics*, NSW, May 1990 (8304.1; \$5.00)
Building Activity, NSW, March Qtr 1990 (8752.1; \$8.10)
Sawmill Statistics, Qld, March Qtr 1990 (8206.3; \$3.30)
Tourist Accommodation, Tas., Licensed Hotels with Facilities, June 1990 (8646.6; \$5.00)
Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Tas., April 1990 (8741.6; \$3.30)
Tourist Accommodation, NT, March Qtr 1990 (8635.7; \$8.00)
Building Activity, ACT, March Qtr 1990 (8752.8; \$8.00)

Calendar of key releases

Expected releases over the fortnight to 7 August 1990

July

- [26] Production Statistics, Australia, Preliminary, June 1990 (8301.0; \$5.00)
- [27] Balance of Payments, Australia, June 1990 (5301.0; \$12.00)
- [] Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, May 1990 (6407.0; \$9.00)
- [30] Export Price Index, Australia, May 1990 (6405.0; \$5.00)
- [] Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, May 1990 (6411.0; \$8.50)
- [] Building Approvals, Australia, June 1990 (8731.0; \$8.50)
- [] Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, Preliminary, June 1990 (9301.0; \$4.00)

August

- [1] Consumer Price Index, June Quarter 1990, (6401.0; \$10.00)

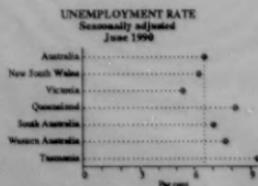
The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to

24 July 1990

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Dec qr 89)*	0.6	5.0	27.4	24.3	- 6.9	- 34.5	n.a.	n.a.	4.4
Retail turnover (May 90) (trend estimate)	7.3	2.1	7.0	5.6	5.8	9.3	n.a.	9.3	5.5
New motor vehicle registrations (May 90)*	14.3	35.3	10.6	1.4	- 8.2	n.a.	5.4	3.4	14.2
Number of dwelling unit approvals (May 90)	- 18.4	- 32.1	- 29.8	7.6	- 31.5	- 25.1	63.0	9.7	- 24.2
Value of total building work done (Dec qr)	20.3	13.7	15.6	23.4	24.1	9.1	15.9	5.6	17.6
Employed persons (June 90)*	1.9	2.4	3.7	2.4	2.7	4.0	- 2.3	1.3	2.4
Capital city consumer price index (Mar qr 90)	9.1	8.7	7.8	6.9	9.1	7.2	6.2	8.3	8.6
Average weekly earnings (full- time adult ordinary time) (February 90)	8.0	6.4	5.1	7.5	4.5	7.3	4.8	6.4	6.6
Population (Dec 89)	0.9	1.3	3.1	1.1	2.8	0.9	- 0.1	2.2	1.6
Guest nights in licensed hotels and motels etc (Dec qr 89)	1.3	- 4.7	- 8.7	10.6	0.7	- 11.2	- 19.6	- 8.5	- 2.9

* Seasonally adjusted for States (but not Territories)



The latest ...

Key national indicators - consolidated to 24 July 1990

				Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
		Period		Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National production							
Gross domestic product	— current prices — 1984-85 prices	\$m	Mar. qtr 90	89,263 62,050	94,113 65,441	2.3 1.8	9.8 4.4
Industrial activity							
New capital expenditure	— current prices — 1984-85 prices	\$m	Mar. qtr 90	6,200 4,657	6,995 5,244	-1.5 -2.9	-2.4 -8.1
Expected new capital expenditure	"	Three months to June 90	"	8,040	n.a.	n.a.	-4.8
Retail turnover	— current prices — 1984-85 prices	"	May 90	7,015	6,956	-2.1	7.2
New motor vehicle registrations	"	Mar. qtr 90	14,013	14,836	0.0	1.4	
Dwelling unit approvals	no.	May 90	60,353	54,255	0.5	14.2	
Value of all building approvals	"	"	13,003	11,465	+4.3	-25.9	
Value of total building work done	"	"	2,587	2,243	+12.8	-14.6	
— current prices — 1984-85 prices	"	Mar. qtr 90	6,922 4,429	7,562 4,839	-2.0 -3.0	5.8 -2.3	
Manufacturers' sales	"	Mar. qtr 90	33,133	36,124	2.4	8.3	
Expected manufacturers' sales	"	Three months to June 90	36,461	n.a.	n.a.	6.3	
Labour							
Employed persons	'000	June 90	7,910.0	7,906.1	0.0	2.4	
Unemployment rate †	%	"	6.4	6.6	0.1	0.6	
Participation rate †	"	"	63.8	63.8	0.1	0.9	
Job vacancies	'000	Feb. 90	60.9	56.1	-15.0	-15.9	
Average weekly overtime per employee	hours	"	1.4	1.4	-8.7	-3.5	
Prices, profits and wages							
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0	Mar. qtr 90	204.1	n.a.	1.7	8.6	
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industry	1984-85 = 100.0	Mar. 90	119.9	n.a.	-1.3	2.0	
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1968-69 = 100.0	Mar. 90	571.5	n.a.	0.7	6.6	
Company profits before income tax	\$m	Mar. qtr 90	3,668	4,633	9.0	2.0	
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)	\$	Feb. 90	524.70	n.a.	1.6	6.6	
Interest rates (b) (monthly average)							
90-day bank bills †	% per annum	May 90	15.00	n.a.	-0.1	-3.2	
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	13.50	n.a.	-0.3	-0.4	
Balance of payments							
Exports of merchandise	\$m	May 90	3,936	3,798	-7.0	1.0	
Imports of merchandise	"	"	4,115	3,822	-5.8	-11.9	
Balance on merchandise trade (c)	"	"	-179	-24	n.a.	95.6	
Balance of goods and services (c)	"	"	-458	-279	-22.9	70.0	
Balance on current account (c)	"	"	-1,550	-1,343	0.4	28.1	
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0	Mar. qtr 90	n.a.	104.0	-4.9	-5.9	
Foreign investment							
Net foreign debt (e)	\$m	31 Mar. 90	123,570	n.a.	5.3	15.3	
Net foreign liabilities (e)	"	"	163,453	n.a.	2.8	17.5	
Exchange rates (monthly average)							
SUS	per \$A	May 90	0.7618	n.a.	-0.3	-1.5	
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0	"	59.8	n.a.	-1.3	0.3	
Other indicators							
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million	Dec. 89	16.9	n.a.	0.4	1.6	
Overseas visitors	(000)	Apr. 90	181	195	8.8	10.5	

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Latest figures released Thursday, 26 July 1990. n.a. = not available.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points.
 Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

